

## **OPENING STATEMENT**

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Subcommittee on Space  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

*“Space Traffic Management: How to Prevent a Real Life ‘Gravity’”*

May 9, 2014

Thank you very much. I want to welcome our witnesses to this morning’s hearings, and I look forward to your testimony. I will be brief in my remarks so that we have enough time to hear from these experts before we have to go vote.

Orbital debris, or “space junk” as it is sometimes called—is not science fiction—it is a reality, and something that has implications for the way we operate both our crewed spacecraft and our commercial and government satellites. It is a growing problem.

Dealing with the increase in orbital debris will not be easy. As our witnesses will testify, the issues associated with its mitigation and its potential removal from orbit are complex. A number of agencies are involved, not all of whom are represented at today’s hearing.

I am pleased that the bipartisan NASA Authorization bill that we recently marked up now contains several provisions related to orbital debris. I believe that their inclusion is a useful start to addressing this complex set of issues.

That said, I would caution against legislating further in this area until we have a better understanding of the issues involved. This morning’s hearing will provide a good starting point for Members to learn about both the challenge presented by orbital debris as well as some of the potential approaches to dealing with that challenge. I am pleased that the Subcommittee is holding it.

In closing, I again want to welcome our witnesses, and I yield back the balance of my time.